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SUBJECT: CORFU PROCESS SESSION VI: HUMAN DIMENSION

ESSENTIAL TO EUROPEAN SECURITY

¶1. The sixth session of the Corfu Process dialogue October 27 was dedicated to the common challenges in the Human Dimension (HD), with a focus on human rights, democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the freedom of the media.

Delegations catalogued ways in which HD commitments had fallen short in implementation and debated possible ways to improve both the commitments and their implementations. Many said enhanced political will was essential to any lasting improvement, but the Russians decried excessive interference in the internal affairs of States, insisting that the degree and extent of commitment implementation was only the business of sovereign states. Many agreed with the U.S. proposal from the previous week's session for a new conflict prevention mechanism, saying it would also be helpful in the HD. In the afternoon, a number of delegations underscored the importance of media freedom as a core human right. End Summary.

¶2. Opening the session, Greek Ambassador Marinaki declared that human dimension issues have been integral to almost all Corfu discussions. She stated that the existing OSCE acquis, based on existing documents and declarations, is adequate, but we need to focus on more effective implementation. Without effective efforts in the human dimension, internal security could be jeopardized and in turn, a state's external security.

ODIHR

¶3. In his opening presentation, Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Janez Lenarcic highlighted the importance of the human dimension as a key element of European security, cited the strengths of the current OSCE commitments and urged greater political will to implement those commitments. He called for an enhanced system of peer review and lamented that existing mechanisms have not effectively contributed to their intended objectives. It was up to the participating States (pS), he said, to make the process more effective.

¶4. Most Ambassadors concurred in the analysis that implementation of existing HD commitments was critical. Luxembourg stated that human rights, democratization, and the rule of law are indivisible and that implementation of these is the only way to guarantee equal freedoms. Romania said that all HD commitments needed to be implemented and there could not be a hierarchy of commitments. Georgia called for additional commitments, especially on issues involving involuntary immigration and IDPs.

¶5. Furthermore, a number of delegations agreed with Ambassador Lenarcic that better commitment implementation depended on renewed political will by the participating States. The French Ambassador urged reaffirming the validity of all commitments, considering how to use OSCE tools to enhance implementation and studying how to reinforce commitments in a few, key areas. Even the Belarusian Ambassador viewed the Human Dimension as an important element of the OSCE and felt greater efforts to secure the necessary political will to implement it were needed.

¶6. On the need for increased peer review, many delegations

agreed on the value of usable and effective OSCE tools and instruments. France felt the most valuable standing tool was the OSCE Field Presences in a number of countries. Poland valued strong autonomous institutions that can guide pS perspectives, while Italy cited room for improvement in the mandate and management of certain executive structures. Several cited this as a hallmark of the OSCE and felt a refocus on peer review demonstrated the continuing value of the OSCE and its work.

¶7. Most delegations felt that peer review could be strengthened through new and improved mechanisms. Several again praised the U.S. paper we released on October 20 proposing a new crisis response mechanism. Being a bit more circumspect, Turkey said it welcomed the ideas amplified by the U.S. paper. Romania, echoed by Luxembourg, questioned the need for a new mechanism, urging, instead, better analysis of how existing mechanisms are being used. Lithuania stressed the importance of flexibility and creativity in the actual use of any existing or new mechanism. Most concretely, Georgia proposed a one-day seminar aimed at gaining a better understanding why available mechanisms in the HD are not better utilized.

¶8. Finally, most delegations also commented on the Warsaw Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in early October, commenting in particular on the greater success this year of civil society involvement and input. Nonetheless, several delegations urged a reformulation of the annual meeting; Turkey suggested a renewed look at its modalities. Russia disliked the "name and shame" approach at the HDIM and, citing a recommendation from the 2005 report by the Panel of Eminent Persons & Common Purpose: Towards a More Effective OSCE,⁸ felt that it could be shortened to one week.
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

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¶9. The Representative for Freedom of the Media (RFOM) Miklos Haraszti kicked off the afternoon session with a rambling, "philosophical" discourse on the underpinnings of the HD. Referencing the morning's focus on implementing HD commitments, he termed the last decade as one of "disillusionment," and asserted his belief that some countries had made downgrading the OSCE a strategic objective. He urged a recommitment to helping societies build democracy from the inside, better focus on the atmosphere, including media, surrounding elections, spreading out through the year the OSCE's HD meetings and regular review by OSCE institutions of commitment fulfillment by participating States.

¶10. Of the few delegations commenting directly on media, most agreed on the vital role a free media plays in ensuring democratic values. Several highlighted challenges to media freedom from all over the OSCE, not just "east of Vienna." Romania stressed the value of a fully free media and said shortfalls in commitments could come in a number of guises, including government regulation and business practice. Canada decried continuing violence, and at times its seeming impunity, against journalists. Belarus urged great media responsibility and suggested Haraszti consider the virtues of quieter diplomacy.

¶11. Several delegations, including the U.S., also mentioned how technological change, namely the rise of the Internet, has fundamentally altered the debate on media freedom and may necessitate an updating of commitments. Romania cited the greater use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, as yet another developing trend that required a reconsideration of the definition of media.

¶12. In her concluding remarks, the Greek CiO said that, despite evident differences in the debate, the essential role of the HD in comprehensive security had been reaffirmed. Implementation and how it is characterized and measured are clearly concerns of all participating States, she added. Peer review clearly needs to be more effective and any new measures need to be impartial and avoid naming and shaming.
COMMENT

¶13. This was an important session in the Corfu Process, yet there were few surprises as to positions taken, and little

new ground was broken. Speakers were overwhelmingly "traditional" western democracies, countered by Russia and Belarus, with the Central Asians listening silently. As expected, Haraszti suffered the greater wrath of comments from the Russian ambassador who, in response to Haraszti's quarterly report to the PC on October 29 made the outrageous statement: "Thank God, Miklos, your term is coming to an end."⁸ Despite this, the debate succeeded in cementing the role of the HD in any consideration of European security architecture and assured that any follow-on process next year under the Kazakh Chair will have to contain a significant and meaningful HD component.

FULLER